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DEPT FOR NEA/IPA AND SEMEP

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: VARIETY OF IMPORTS INTO GAZA INCREASED

Classified By: EconCouns David R. Burnett for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) The Office of the Quartet Representative's (OQR's) Private Sector Development Specialist reported December 8 that the variety of goods entering Gaza has increased significantly during the last two months, though the overall quantity has remained steady, at about 100-130 double truckloads per day. In October 2009, approximately 35 types of items were allowed into Gaza. By early December, that number had increased to about 54 types of products and is expected to increase further, up to perhaps 93 item types, according to the PA commercial crossings committee in Gaza. Items currently allowed to pass include 36 food items, six types of personal care products, two types of animal feed, and ten other types of items (e.g., medicines, fertilizers, nylon covers for greenhouses).

¶2. (C) COMMENT: While this increase in variety of products allowed through the official crossings is certainly good news, Embassy has received no assurance from the GOI that this change is permanent. For example, approximately 7000 live cattle and specialty foods, such as dates, sesame and zatar, were imported through Kerem Shalom for the Eid al-Adha festival, a customary gesture during a holiday season. We have also received hints that the recent expansion in the range of goods permitted into Gaza may be a carrot in the Shalit negotiations, though none of our GOI crossings contacts are authorized to discuss the negotiation details.

¶3. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: Despite the recent expansion, the USG will need to keep up pressure on the GOI. So long as the Israelis do not have a 'positive list' of acceptable items for export to Gaza, the current "largesse" could be easily scaled back and only the most basic humanitarian goods permitted across, particularly if the Shalit negotiations are inconclusive. That said, as long as there are no problems and this relative leniency is not advertised so as to arouse adverse public pressure, an expanded variety of products may continue to enter Gaza.

CUNNINGHAM